

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

**SYSTEM AND METHOD TO PROVIDE A VISUAL ADMINISTRATOR IN A
NETWORK MONITORING SYSTEM**

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System and Method to Provide a Visual Administrator in a Network Monitoring System

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] Embodiments of the invention generally relate to the field of system resource monitoring and more particularly, to a system and method to provide a visual administrator in a network monitoring system.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Many businesses are providing access to their products and services through computer networks. The Java 2 Enterprise Edition Specification v1.3, published on July 27, 2001 (the J2EE Standard) defines an increasingly popular architecture for the server-side of enterprise computer networks. As these computer networks become more complex, there is an increased need for improved administration, monitoring, and management of enterprise computer networks.

[0003] An emerging standard, JSR-000003 Java Management eXtensions (JMX), version 1.2 (hereinafter, the JMX Specification), provides a standardized way to manage arbitrary Java resources in enterprise computer networks. The JMX Specification describes a management architecture, an Application Program Interface (API), and a number of services for Java enabled applications. Together, these elements provide a standardized way to manage arbitrary Java resources.

[0004] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of selected elements of the management architecture defined by the JMX Specification. The JMX management architecture primarily consists of instrumentation level 110 and agent level 120. Instrumentation level 110 includes Java management beans (or simply, MBeans) 112 and 114. An MBean is a Java object that

represents a manageable resource, such as an application, a service, a component, or a device. An MBean provides a management interface that consists of attributes and operations that are exposed for management purposes. The term "attribute" refers to a value (or characteristic) of an object. The term "operation" refers to a process that an object performs.

[0005] Agent level 120 includes MBean server 124. MBean server 124 provides a registry for MBeans 112 and 114 and also an interface between registered MBeans and distributed services level 130. Management applications (e.g., in distributed services level 130) may access services provided by MBean server 124 to manipulate MBeans 112 and 114. The services provided by MBean server 124 may be defined by the JMX Specification and may include a monitoring service, a timer service, and a relation service for registered MBeans. Non-Java objects may also register with MBean server 124 if they have a Java wrapper. The term "Java wrapper" refers to data that proceeds or frames a non-Java resource so that the non-Java resource can interface with a Java resource.

[0006] Distributed services level 130 provides an interface between management applications (not shown) and MBean server 124. Management applications may connect to MBean server 124 through a variety of means including connector 132 and protocol adaptor 134. Connector 132 may provide an interface to management applications that complies with the JMX Specification or it may provide an interface for proprietary management applications. Protocol adaptor 134 translates operations between MBean server 124 and well-known protocols such as, Request For Comments (RFC) 2617 entitled, "HyperText Transport Protocol (HTTP) Authentication: Basic and Digest

Access Authentication," June 1999 (Hereinafter, the HTTP Protocol). The JMX Specification, however, does not provide a mechanism to display and configure monitored resources in a network with a graphical user interface.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] A system and method to provide a visual administrator for interfacing with a network monitoring system is described. In one embodiment of the invention, the network monitoring system is a Java Management eXtensions (JMX) – based monitoring system. In an embodiment, the monitoring system includes a monitor tree having a plurality of nodes, each of the plurality of nodes including a monitor managed bean and an associated resource. In an embodiment, the monitoring system may also include a visual administrator to provide a graphical interface to the monitor tree.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Embodiments of the invention are illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements.

Figure 1 is a block diagram of selected elements of the management architecture defined by the Java Management eXtensions (JMX) Specification.

Figure 2 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture 200.

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture 300.

Figure 4 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture 400.

Figure 5 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a Java monitoring architecture including a monitor tree.

Figure 6 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a tree node of a monitor tree.

Figure 7 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a Java monitoring architecture having administration services.

Figure 8 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture having an Extensible Markup Language file.

Figure 9 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture having an Extensible Markup Language file.

Figure 10 is a flow diagram illustrating certain aspects of a method for providing a visual administrator in a network monitoring system.

Figure 11 illustrates an exemplary Graphical User Interface (GUI) 1100 provided by a visual administrator, according to an embodiment of the invention.

Figure 12 illustrates an exemplary GUI 1200 for viewing and/or setting an attribute of a tree node, according to an embodiment of the invention.

Figure 13 illustrates an exemplary GUI 1300 for viewing and/or invoking an operation of a tree node, according to an embodiment of the invention.

Figure 14 is a block diagram of computing device 1100 implemented according to an embodiment of the invention.

Figure 15 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of an application server architecture.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0009] Embodiments of the invention are directed to a system and method to provide a visual administrator for interfacing with a network monitoring system. In one embodiment of the invention, the network monitoring system is a Java Management eXtensions (JMX) - based monitoring system. In an embodiment, the monitoring system includes a monitor tree having a plurality of nodes, each of the plurality of nodes including a monitor managed bean and an associated resource. As is further described below, in an embodiment, the monitoring system may also include a visual administrator to provide a graphical interface to the monitor tree.

[00010] FIG. 2 illustrates one embodiment of the invention implemented within a JMX-based Java monitoring architecture (JMA) 200 for administration and management of Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (“J2EE”) engine 206. According to one embodiment, the administration and management of the resources associated with J2EE engine 206 may include monitoring of various system resources, including Java resources and other resources associated with J2EE engine 206. Examples of monitored resources include, and are not limited to: the kernel, services, interfaces, libraries for each of the dispatchers and servers, network connections, memory consumption, threads, classloaders, database connections, database transactions, HyperText Transport Protocol (“HTTP”) cache, Java Messaging Service (“JMS”) queries and topics, sessions, and the like. In an embodiment, a monitoring service, such as the monitoring service 212 may be used to monitor system resources.

[00011] According to one embodiment, monitor service 212 may gather and maintain data related to monitored resources such as monitoring data 210. Monitoring data 210 may provide a history of monitoring data which may be used to provide alerts when various resources, such as parameters, applications, or components reach a critical state. In an embodiment, the features of JMA 200 may be enabled or disabled depending on administrative commands provided by, for example, visual administrator 214.

[00012] According to one embodiment, JMA 200 may include monitoring service 212 and one or more JMX-based monitor servers (JMX monitors). Monitoring service 212 may help establish a connection between a JMX monitor and the various components of JMA 200. In one embodiment, the JMX monitors may reside and work on separate or remote Java virtual machines (JVMs) to collect data from cluster elements, and report information and statistics regarding the cluster nodes and their components to, for example, visual administrator 214 having a monitor viewer 216, and/or to CCMS 222 via CCMS agent 202, and to various other third party tools. CCMS 222, visual administrator 214, and other third party tools may reside generally on client side 220, while other components, as illustrated, may reside on server side 218.

[00013] FIG. 3 illustrates an embodiment of the invention employed within a Java monitoring architecture ("JMA") 300. The illustrated embodiment includes monitor server 302 comprised of JMX-based monitors (or simply, JMX monitors) to, for example, monitor and collect data from various cluster elements and resources 310-314 of an application server engine. In one embodiment the application server engine is a Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE) engine (e.g., J2EE engine 206, shown in FIG. 2). The underlying principles of the invention, however, are not tied to any particular

specification or set of specifications. According to one embodiment, monitor server 302 reports or transmit the collected data to various client-side 220 components and/or applications, such visual administrator 214 having monitor viewer 216. Monitor viewer 216 may be used to enable viewing of the monitoring data received from monitor server 302.

[00014] The data collected may include information and statistics related to, for example, applications, server parameters, cluster nodes and their components of the J2EE engine. According to one embodiment, the collected data may also be reported to CCMS 222 via CCMS agent 202, and/or to third party tools 318. In one embodiment, third party tools 318 include a file system to, for example, temporarily store the collected data in a specified file format, for example, an Extensible Markup Language (“XML”) format or a HyperText Markup Language (“HTML”) format. The collected data may subsequently be reported to the components on client-side 220 (e.g., in an XML or HTML format).

[00015] According to one embodiment, the expected overhead of JMA 300 may vary according to its functionality. For example, the overhead may be light when reporting to CCMS 222 or third party tools 318, as opposed to when reporting to visual administrator 214. Furthermore, the larger the requesting and/or reporting interval of monitor server 302, the smaller the expected overhead may be. The expected overhead may be relatively higher when using monitor viewer 216 to actively retrieve and view the monitoring data.

[00016] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture 400. According to one embodiment, Java monitoring architecture (JMA)

400 may include monitor service 402 to establish a connection between one or more managed bean servers (or simply, bean servers) 404-408 and the rest of JMA 400 (e.g., monitor viewer 410). Monitor viewer 410 may include a Graphical User Interface (GUI)-based monitor viewer or a monitor browser. In one embodiment, the GUI is a "Swing-based" GUI. A Swing-based GUI refers to a GUI that is based on the Swing API provided by any of the Java 2 Enterprise Edition Specifications, for example, v1.3, published on July 27, 2001 (hereinafter the J2EE Standard). Monitor service 202 may include a number of components including monitor servers and interfaces.

[00017] According to one embodiment, managed beans (or simply, MBeans or beans) (e.g., runtime managed beans or resources beans 412-416) may be used to provide continuous monitoring of various resources 424-428 associated with a Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE) engine. Resources 424-428 may include a kernel, services, interfaces, and libraries for dispatchers and servers, such as dispatcher 418 and servers 420-422.

[00018] FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a Java monitoring architecture including monitor tree 514. Monitoring typically refers to a periodic oversight of a process, or the implementation of an activity, which seeks to establish the extent to which input deliveries, work schedules, required actions and targeted outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct the deficiencies detected. According to one embodiment, Java monitoring system or architecture (JMA) 500 and its various components, including modules and servers, may be used to provide monitoring of resources and the semantics of data to ensure oversight, and may provide monitoring information to enable the proper analysis of resources 520.

Furthermore, according to one embodiment, JMA 500 may provide data processing and transportation for data to various modules (e.g., monitor tree 514) and customer level components (e.g., CCMS 508, administrative tools, including a visual administrator 504, and third-party tools or plug-ins).

[00019] According to one embodiment, JMA 500 provides monitoring of a Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE) engine (e.g., J2EE engine 206, shown in FIG. 2), and its associated resources 520, including but not limited to various managers, services, components, such as a kernel, interfaces, libraries for each of the dispatchers and servers, network connections, memory consumption, threads, classloaders, database connections, database transactions, HyperText Transport Protocol (“HTTP”) cache, Java Messaging Service (“JMS”) queues and topics, and sessions.

[00020] To monitor resources 520, JMA 500 may employ monitor service 502 having modules, servers, and/or interfaces to connect the monitoring side with the rest of JMA 500, including central database 510 and client-side applications, such as visual administrator 504 and CCMS 508. The monitoring architecture may include a managed bean server (bean server) 512, a plurality of monitor managed beans (monitor beans) 516 and/or runtime managed beans (runtime beans) 518. In one embodiment, runtime beans 518 register with bean server 512 to provide monitoring of underlying resources 520 at runtime. Bean server 512 may include a container for monitor beans 516 and runtime beans 518, to provide them access to various resources 520 and management applications 504, 508.

[00021] To provide Java objects (e.g., monitor beans 516 and runtime beans 518) to various applications 504, 508 and to use bean server 512 for such purposes, applications 504, 508 may be made available via the distributed services level (e.g., distributed services level 130, shown in FIG. 1) of the JMX-based architecture (e.g., JMA 500). For example, well-known protocols such as HTTP may be used to communicate with bean server 512 via an appropriate protocol adapter that may translate operations into representations in a given protocol. In addition, one or more connectors may be used to communicatively couple the applications 504, 508 to bean server 512 using a proprietary protocol.

[00022] JMA 500 may be distributed across the three levels of the JMX architecture including a distributed services level, an agent level, and an instrumentation level. The instrumentation level may include, for example, monitor and runtime beans 516, 518. The agent level may include, for example, bean server 512. The distributed services level may include, for example, various applications 540, 508, adaptors, and connectors.

[00023] According to one embodiment, various Java resources 520 at the agent level may be included as an external library. A JMX service module (jmx_service) may provide some of the functionality from the distributed services level, and may create an instance of bean server 512 on each of the nodes in one or more clusters and provide local and cluster connections to all of them. Monitor beans 516 may be registered clusterwide. As such, a user or client may work with bean server 512 transparently (e.g., from the user's perspective there may appear to be only one bean sever 512 showing all monitor beans 516 of the cluster). In addition, to receive JMX notifications clusterwide,

a notification service module (`jmx_notification`) may be employed in combination with the JMX service.

[00024] Bean server 512 may include a registry of monitor and runtime beans 516-518. Bean server 512 may also serve as a single entry point for calling monitor and runtime beans 516-518 in a uniform fashion from applications 504, 508, to monitor the resources 520, and to collect or gather the monitoring data or information associated with monitored resources 526. According to one embodiment, bean server 512 may reside at a particular Java virtual machine (JVM) and may call registered monitor and runtime beans 516-518 from the same JVM or other JVMs. According to one embodiment, bean server 512 may, in fact, be multiple managed bean servers. According to one embodiment, various modules of monitor service 502 may reside on the same JVM (e.g., with bean server 512). In an alternative embodiment, the various modules of monitor service 502 may reside on separate JVMs.

[00025] According to one embodiment, resources 520 including kernel resources, libraries, interfaces, and services may be monitored using the runtime and monitor beans 516-518 registered with the bean server 512. To monitor the resources 520, including arbitrary Java resources, and be manageable, a management interface may be provided, and objects (e.g., monitor bean 516 and runtime bean 518) that implement such management interface may be registered with bean server 512. Bean server 512, as previously described, may then serve as a container for monitor bean 516 and runtime bean 518, and provide them with access to resources 520 to be monitored.

[00026] According to one embodiment, runtime bean 518 (also sometimes referred to herein as a “resource” bean) may provide continuous or periodic monitoring of resources 520 and may provide dynamic resource notifications or responses including information regarding resources 520 to each of the monitor beans 516. According to one embodiment, monitor service 502 may retrieve an Extensible Markup Language (XML) file 528, having semantics and installation directives on how monitor tree 514 is created, from database 510 to create monitor tree 514. Monitor tree 514 may then be generated with various nodes, such as node 530. Each of the nodes may include one or more monitor beans 516 associated with one or more resources 526.

[00027] According to one embodiment, monitor bean 516 at node 530 may request information regarding its associated resource 526 from the runtime bean 518 associated with the resource. For example, monitor bean 516 may invoke a method or request 522 during runtime to retrieve monitoring data from runtime bean 518, and runtime bean 518 may respond or provide a notification including the requested information 524 to monitor bean 516 regarding associated resource 526. According to another embodiment, information 524 regarding associated resource 526 may be provided periodically as predetermined and pre-set using timer 532. Timer 532 may include predetermined criteria including a predetermined time period for periodically providing information 524 from runtime bean 518 to monitor bean 516.

[00028] Monitor service 502 may include an administrative services interface to provide the monitoring data or information to, for example, administrative tools including visual administrator 504. The information received at visual administrator 504 may be displayed using a monitor viewer 506 including a Web-based monitor browser or

Graphical User Interface (GUI)-based monitor viewer. Monitor service 502 may include other interfaces, such as a managed enterprise Java beans ("MEJB") interface, to connect to remote third party tools, and a CCMS agent to connect to CCMS 508.

[00029] The MEJB of the MEJB interface may be implemented with a session Enterprise Java Bean (EJB). The MEJB may provide local and remote access to a platform's manageable resources through the EJB interoperability protocol. The MEJB may reside in and may be executed in a runtime environment (e.g., MEJB container), which may provide a number of common interfaces and service to the MEJB. The common interfaces and services may include security and transaction support. The MEJB interface may provide future scalability and allow multiple user interfaces to be used, such as a standard Web browser.

[00030] The managed beans, such as monitor and runtime beans 516-518, may include the following two logical types of registered managed beans: (1) standard beans and (2) specific beans. Standard beans may provide standard functionality of start/stop, get/set properties, etc. Standard beans may be registered by default for all deployed components (e.g., kernel, libraries, interfaces, and services). Specific beans may provide component-specific functionalities that may vary from one component to another. To interface with a specific bean, a component may register an object that may implement a specific interface to list the processes available for its management and to extend the management interface (e.g., com:company.engine.frame.state. ManagementInterface).

[00031] According to one embodiment, for kernel resources, a standard bean may be registered with each manager having a specific bean. A prerequisite for this may be to

return a non-null value in a method (e.g., `getManagementInterface()`) from the manager interface. For libraries and interfaces, only standard beans may be registered. For services, except for the already registered standard beans, each of the services may register specific beans. Implementation of the management interface may also cause a specific bean to be registered for that particular service.

[00032] FIG. 6 illustrates an embodiment of tree node 530 of a monitor tree. According to one embodiment, a hierarchical monitor tree (e.g., monitor tree 514, shown in FIG. 5) may be created to provide a grouping of monitoring agents (e.g., monitor bean 516) and resources 526 associated with the monitoring agents, to provide a more manageable monitoring architecture. Although the monitoring agents and their corresponding resources may be grouped in a monitor tree, they are individually represented as tree nodes, and provide individual reporting of each of the resources, releasing the module developer from programmatically reporting the monitoring data to a central location.

[00033] For example, according to one embodiment, using the monitor tree, the module developer may configure runtime beans 518 to monitor one or more resources 520 and provide monitoring information 524 to monitor beans 516 at a particular node 530 (or group of nodes). Monitoring information 524 may be provided continuously and/or upon request 522 from monitor bean 516 associated with the underlying resource 526.

[00034] Associated resource 526 is associated with a particular monitor bean 516 to individualize the monitoring process (e.g., by receiving monitoring information about a

particular resource rather information about all resources). Similarly, according to one embodiment, particular resources 520 may be associated with one or more runtime beans 518 to further individualize the process. Resources 520 may include the kernel, services, interfaces, libraries, and the like, for each of the dispatchers and servers associated with an application server engine (e.g., such as the Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE) engine 206 described above).

[00035] As used herein, a “J2EE server” may include distributed J2EE servers, including, for example, multiple instances of a group of redundant J2EE servers and a dispatcher. Associated resource 526 may refer to one of the resources 520 that is associated with monitor bean 516 at node 530 to, for example, allow monitor bean 516 to request monitoring information from runtime bean 518. The end result is a simplified distribution of monitoring information in the form of a monitor tree with individual nodes, as opposed to a system in which monitoring information must be centralized.

[00036] According to one embodiment, monitoring data 524 may then be provided to various client level applications, such as visual administrator 504 and/or CCMS 508 via monitor service 502. According to one embodiment, monitor viewer 506 may be used to view the monitor tree (e.g., monitor tree 514, shown in FIG. 5) and its various tree nodes and the monitoring information associated with the each of the nodes (e.g., node 530 and associated resource 526). A user may select any of the nodes or resources shown as part of the monitor tree to view the monitoring data. According to one embodiment, a color or symbol combination may be used to determine the status of associated resources at various nodes. For example, a red/green/yellow combination may be used wherein, if associated resource 526 at node 530 is in a “normal” state, a green

mark may be shown next to it. If associated resource 526 approaches a critical value, the mark may turn yellow and once the associated resource 526 reaches the critical value, the mark may turn red. Additionally, the mark may be of a different color, such as white, when there is inactivity associated with the associated resource 526. However, the underlying principles of the invention are not limited to any particular color scheme.

[00037] According to one embodiment, monitor viewer 506 may be used to display other information related to the resources 520 including, for example, the name of the resource, the resource description, the resource type, relevant dates and/or time, resource properties and values. The information may also include data history regarding the resources 520. The data history may include, for example, values associated with the resource over different periods of time (e.g., over a minute, hour, day, . . . etc).

[00038] As mentioned above, according to one embodiment, XML file 528 may be retrieved by monitor service 502 from central database 510 to generate monitor tree 514. The XML file may include semantics and directives to generate the monitor tree using monitor service 502. An XML parser may be used to parse the semantics and directives of the XML file. Furthermore, a Java Management Extensions (JMX)-based application programming interface (API) may be used to create and customize the monitor tree. The monitor API may facilitate and handle both (1) the creation of the monitor tree and (2) the customization of the monitor tree as well as the reporting of the monitoring information and values. Typically, an API refers to a language or message format used by an application program to communicate with the operating system, communications protocols, and/or with other control programs (e.g., database management systems).

[00039] FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a Java monitoring architecture having administration services. According to one embodiment, Java monitoring architecture (JMA) 700 may include a set of administration services 706-708 to provide a number of services for various components and modules of JMA 700. As illustrated, JMA 700 may include basic administration service (<basicadmin> or "basic service") 706 and administration adapter service (<adminadapter> or "adapter service") 708.

[00040] Along with providing instrumentation of certain modules and components (e.g., libraries and interfaces), basic service 706 may also provide and facilitate registration of managed beans (beans) 710 with managed bean server (bean server) 512 via monitor service 502. Beans 710 may include monitor managed beans (monitor beans) 702 (including, e.g., monitor bean 516, shown in FIG. 5) and runtime managed beans (runtime beans or resource beans) 704 (including, e.g., runtime bean 518, shown in FIG. 5).

[00041] According to one embodiment, monitor beans 702 registered with bean server 512 using basic service 706 may be used for individual tree nodes (nodes) of monitor tree 514. Each of the monitor beans 702 may be used for reboot and shutdown, as well as for defining the type of nodes (e.g., dispatcher or server type nodes) and the resources associated with each of the nodes, for which monitoring information may be retrieved from runtime beans 704. Runtime beans 704 may be used for monitoring of all clusters and resources 520.

[00042] Basic service 706 may provide registration for the following two logical types of beans 710: (1) standard beans and (2) specific beans. Standard beans may provide standard functionality of start/stop, get/set properties, etc. Standard beans may be registered by default for all deployed components or resources (e.g., kernel, libraries, interfaces, and services). Specific beans may provide component-specific functionalities that may vary from one component to another. To have specific beans, a component may register an object that may implement a specific interface to list the processes available for its management and to extend the management interface (e.g., com.company.engine.frame. state.ManagementInterface).

[00043] For kernel resources, a standard bean may be registered with each manager having a specific bean. A prerequisite for this may be to return a non-null value in a method (e.g., getManagementInterface()) from the manager interface. For libraries and interfaces, only standard beans may be registered. For services, except for the already registered standard beans, each of the services may register specific beans, and implementation of the management interface may also cause a specific bean to be registered for that particular service.

[00044] Adapter service 708 may be part of the distributed services level of JMA 700. Adapter service 708 may include or provide the following: (1) remote connector 710; (2) convenience interface 712; (3) swing-based Graphical User Interface (GUI) 714; and (4) shell commands 716. By having remote connector 710, adapter service 708 may allow users to have remote access to the bean server 512 and seek monitoring information relating to one or more resources 520.

[00045] Convenience interface 712 may allow users to remotely access bean server 512 using remote administration tools. Remotely accessing bean server 512 may include remotely accessing and working with beans 702 as registered by basic service 706 based on the semantics of resources 520 that are instrumented and monitored by these beans 702. Stated differently, adapter service 708 provides a high-level view to bean server 512. The high-level view may be represented by a monitor tree, such as monitor tree 514. Furthermore, adapter service 708 may retrieve monitor tree 514 and provide interfaces to manage each type of node in monitor tree 514. By way of example, the node types within the monitor tree may include a root node representing the cluster (“TYPE_CLUSTER_MBEAN”), a basic cluster node type representing a node within the cluster (“TYPE_CLUSTER_NODE_MBEAN”), a standard MBean that instruments the kernel of a cluster node (“TYPE_KERNEL_MBEAN”), a standard MBean that instruments a service (“TYPE_SERVICE_MBEAN”), a standard MBean that instruments a library (“TYPE_LIBRARY_MBEAN”), a standard MBean that instruments an interface (“TYPE_INTERFACE_MBEAN”), a standard MBean that instruments a defined group of clusters (“TYPE_GROUP”), and all other MBeans (“TYPE_UNSPECIFIED_MBEAN”). It should be noted, however, that the underlying principles of the invention are not limited to any particular set of MBean types.

[00046] Swing-based GUI 714 may use convenience interface 712 and monitor tree 514 to represent the management functionality of JMA 700 to a human administrator. The console counterpart of the GUI administrator may consist of various shell commands 716 that may be grouped together in an administration command group.

[00047] FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of Java monitoring architecture having an Extensible Markup Language (“XML”) file. According to one embodiment, monitor service 502 of Java monitoring architecture 800 may help generate a monitor tree, such as monitor tree 514, based on semantics 804 and directives 806 of XML file 528. Monitor service 502 may retrieve XML file 528 from a database (e.g., central database 510, shown in FIG. 5).

[00048] The XML technology may be integrated with a Java 2 Platform Enterprise Edition (J2EE) engine (J2EE) (e.g., J2EE 206, shown in FIG. 2) for electronic data interchange, due to XML’s characteristics of being broad and relatively easy to use. To support and build the XML technology, including XML file 528, in the J2EE engine, a number of application programming interfaces (APIs), such as API 802, may be employed to use XML file 528 to configure various components and application modules. For example, XML file 528 may be used to facilitate components and modules of monitor service 502 to generate monitor tree 514.

[00049] According to one embodiment, API 802 may be a Java Management Extensions (JMX)-based API. Examples of Java APIs include, for example, J2EE XML API, Java API for XML Processing (JAXP), Java Messaging Service (JMS) API, Java API for XML Messaging (JAXM), Java Transaction API (JTA), Java API for XML-Remote Procedure Call (JAX-RPC), Java API XML Binding (JAXB), and Java API for XML Registries (JAXR). API 802 may facilitate and handle both (1) the creation of monitor tree 514 and (2) the customization of monitor tree 514 as well as the reporting of the monitoring information and values. Typically, an API refers to a language or message format used by an application program to communicate with the operating

system, communications protocols, and/or with other control programs (e.g., database management systems). According to one embodiment, multiple XML files may be used and similarly, multiple APIs may be used to generate monitor tree 514.

[00050] According to one embodiment, XML file 528 may include semantics 804 and directives 806 to help monitor service 502 with generating monitor tree 514. Semantics 804 of XML file 828 may include information about monitor tree 514, the monitor managed beans (monitor beans), and the resources to be monitored. Semantics 804 may include a code or a set of instructions for generating monitor tree 514. The set of instructions may include, for example, the instructions for setting the color-coded marks representing the corresponding status of the resources. For example, a green mark may indicate monitoring of the corresponding resource. A yellow mark may indicate continuous monitoring of the corresponding resource and may also indicate that the resource being monitored may be reaching a critical value or stage. A red mark may indicate that the corresponding resource may have reached a critical value. Finally, a white mark may indicate inactivity or that the corresponding resource is not being monitored.

[00051] According to one embodiment, directives 806 may specify the form in which monitor tree 514 may be generated. Stated differently, directives 806 may provide installation instructions for how semantics 804 are to be implemented. For example, directives 806 may include one or more templates to match various monitor beans with corresponding associated resources at various nodes of monitor tree 814. Monitor service 502 may use API 802 to use semantics 804 and directives 806 together to generate monitor tree 514.

[00052] Semantics 804 and directives 806 of XML file 528 may include elements (e.g., similar to HyperText Markup Language (HTML) tags) to provide context to the information (e.g., semantics 804 and directives 806) of XML file 528. XML file 528 may be document-centric to be used by humans or data-centric to be used by another software application or module containing data extracted from a database, such as central database 510, and may be submitted to API 802. XML file 528 may include the following components: (1) a prologue at the beginning of XML file 528; (2) elements or sequences of elements, as described above, containing data or other elements similar to the HTML tags; and (3) attributes associated with each of the elements to further qualify the elements.

[00053] FIG. 9 illustrates additional details associated with the interpretation of XML file 528. To efficiently use XML file 528 for generating monitor tree 514, XML file 528 may be parsed. Stated differently, semantics 804, directives 806, and other components of XML file 528 may be parsed using an application known as XML parser (or XML processor) 902. XML file 528 and schema (or scheme or plan) 906, if any, associated with XML file 528 may be put into XML parser 902 for parsing of the information (e.g., semantics 804 and directives 806) contained in XML file 528, and for organizing, formatting, and validating of the information. XML parser 902 may check schema 906 to determine whether XML file 528 is of proper form and check the schema 906 to determine whether XML file 528 is valid as defined by the contents of the schema 906.

[00054] XML parser 902 may provide or include an application with access to the elements (as described with reference to FIG. 8) of XML file 528 to establish a link

between XML file 528 and other components or modules, such as the application programming interface (API) 802, of JMA 900. According to one embodiment, API 802 may be used to further comprehend, develop, manipulate, and use XML file 528 for the purposes of implementation of XML file 528. API 802 may be used separately or in combination with XML parser 802. In an embodiment, API 802 may be part of XML parser 902. API 802 and XML parser 902 may provide another application or module, such as the application/module (application) 904, to transform the XML file into its resulting and intended application including the monitor tree 514.

[00055] Application 904 may help facilitate the assignment of various monitor beans, including monitor bean 516, with their associated resources, including associated resource 526, at various nodes, including node 530. According to one embodiment, for the purposes of customizing monitor tree 514, API 802 may include a bootstrapper. The bootstrapper may include a code or a sequence of codes to initiate a relationship between a component agent and monitor bean 516. The customizing may refer to customizing monitor tree 514 according to the customizing data (e.g., thresholds, descriptions, etc.) that may be registered along with monitor bean 516.

[00056] According to one embodiment, application 904 may also be used to help facilitate the assignment of various runtime beans 518, with various resources. For example, application 904 may help runtime bean 518 implement a certain communication interface, based on a required or predetermined monitoring logic, coupled with the resources 520, using a component agent. The monitoring information from the resource 520 may be reported by runtime bean 518 to the component agent which may be later reported to monitor bean 516. A notification system may be employed for maintaining

event-based communication between the component agent and runtime bean 518 when the monitoring data from the resources 520 becomes available.

[00057] XML file 528 may be parsed in several ways including using the Document Object Model (DOM), which reads the entire XML file 528 and forms a tree like structure, or using the Simple API for XML (SAX), which is regarded as an event-driven parser that reads XML file 528 in segments. API 802 may be a Java Management Extensions (JMX)-based API. Examples of Java or JMX-based APIs include J2EE XML API, Java API for XML Processing (JAXP), Java Messaging Service (JMS) API, Java API for XML Messaging (JAXM), Java Transaction API (JTA), Java API for XML-Remote Procedure Call (JAX-RPC), Java API XML Binding (JAXB), and Java API for XML Registries (JAXR).

[00058] Turning now to FIG. 10, the particular methods associated with embodiments of the invention are described in terms of computer software and hardware with reference to a flowchart. The methods to be performed by a visual administrator may constitute state machines or computer programs made up of computer-executable instructions. Describing the methods by reference to a flowchart enables one of ordinary skill in the art to develop such programs including such instructions to carry out the methods on suitably configured computing devices (e.g., one or more processors of a node) executing the instructions from computer-accessible media. The computer-executable instructions may be written in a computer programming language or may be embodied in firmware logic. If written in a programming language conforming to a recognized standard, such instructions can be executed on a variety of hardware platforms and for interface to a variety of operating systems. In addition, embodiments

of the invention are not described with reference to any particular programming language. It will be appreciated that a variety of programming languages may be used to implement the teachings of the invention as described herein. Furthermore, it is common in the art to speak of software, in one form or another (e.g., program, procedure, process, application, etc.), as taking an action or causing a result. Such expressions are merely a shorthand way of saying that execution of the software by a computing device causes the device to perform an action or produce a result.

[00059] FIG. 10 is a flow diagram illustrating certain aspects of a method for providing a visual administrator in a network monitoring system. In one embodiment, the network monitoring system is a Java Management eXtensions (JMX) – based monitoring system. A “JMX-based monitoring system” broadly refers to a monitoring system that is, at least partly based on, the JMX Specification.

[00060] Referring to process block 1010, a file having semantics and directives to generate a monitor tree to individually monitor a plurality of resources within a network is accessed from a database. The term “access” broadly refers to, for example, reading, retrieving, and/or copying the file from the database. In one embodiment, a monitor server (e.g., monitor service 502, shown in FIG. 8) accesses the file from a central database in a cluster of application servers (e.g., central database 1530, shown in FIG. 15). According to one embodiment, the file is an eXtensible Markup Language (XML) file.

[00061] Referring to process block 1020, the monitor tree may be generated to monitor a plurality of resources based, at least in part, on the semantics and directives of

the accessed file (e.g., XML file 528, shown in FIG. 8). Generating the monitor tree is further described above with reference to FIGs. 5-9.

[00062] Referring to process block 1030, at least a portion of the generated monitor tree is displayed on a graphical user interface of a visual administrator. According to one embodiment, the displayed portion of the monitor tree includes one or more tree nodes. Each of the one or more nodes may have a monitor managed bean (e.g., monitor managed bean 516, shown in FIG. 6) and an associated resource (e.g., associated resource 526, shown in FIG. 6).

[00063] In one embodiment, the one or more nodes represent monitored resources within a network having a cluster of application servers. The term “cluster of application servers” refers to a plurality of application servers organized into a cluster architecture (e.g., the cluster architecture illustrated in FIG. 15). In such an embodiment, the monitor tree may have a root node representing the cluster of application servers (e.g., a cluster node). In an embodiment, one or more server (and/or dispatcher) nodes depend from the cluster node. The one or more server (and dispatcher) nodes may represent the individual application servers in the cluster of application servers (e.g., application servers 1514-1518 and/or dispatcher 1512, shown in FIG. 15).

[00064] In one embodiment, each server node may have a depending kernel node. The term “kernel” refers to a fundamental part of a program that provides basic services. In an embodiment, a library node depends from at least one of the server nodes. In such an embodiment, the library node may represent a library of the server from which it depends. The term “library” refers to set of software routines (or functions) that may be accessed by a program.

[00065] In an embodiment, the tree structure may include a service node depending from at least one of the one or more server nodes. In such an embodiment, the service node may represent a service of the server from which it depends. The term “service” refers to functionality derived from a particular software program. The functionality provided by a service may include, and is not limited to, lifecycle management, security, connectivity, transactions, and/or persistence.

[00066] FIG. 11 illustrates an exemplary Graphical User Interface (GUI) 1100 provided by a visual administrator (e.g., visual administrator 504, shown in FIG. 6), according to an embodiment of the invention. GUI 1100 includes window panes 1110 and 1120. The term “pane” broadly refers to a sub-section of a window. The term “window” refers to a scrollable viewing area on a screen. Typically panes and windows are rectangular in shape but they are not required to be rectangular.

[00067] Window pane 1110 displays, at least a portion of, a monitor tree (e.g., monitor tree 514, shown in FIG. 5). In one embodiment, the displayed monitor tree includes one or more tree nodes (e.g., tree node 530 shown in FIG. 6). Each of the one or more tree nodes includes a monitor managed bean (e.g., monitor managed bean 516, shown in FIG. 6) and an associated resource (e.g., associated resource 526, shown in FIG. 6). According to one embodiment, each of the one or more tree nodes represents a monitored resource within a cluster of application servers.

[00068] For example, in the illustrated embodiment, cluster node 1112 is a tree node that represents the entire cluster of application servers. Dispatcher node 1114, in turn, is a tree node that represents the dispatcher for the cluster of application servers. Similarly, server node 1130 represents a server within the cluster of application servers.

While FIG. 11 illustrates only one server node, it is to be understood that window pane 1110 may display more than one server node (e.g., by scrolling down to another server node).

[00069] In an embodiment, each server node has a number of depending tree nodes. Each of the depending tree nodes may represent a monitored resource within the server node. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, server node 1130 has the following exemplary depending tree nodes: kernel node 1132, interfaces node 1134, libraries node 1136, and services node 1138.

[00070] In an embodiment, the monitor tree may be expanded by selecting a tree node that is currently displayed. For example, one or more tree nodes representing one or more services may be displayed by selecting services node 1138. In an embodiment, a +/- sign may be associated with each tree node (with the possible exception of the root tree node) to indicate whether the monitor tree may be expanded (or contracted) by selecting the displayed tree node.

[00071] In an embodiment, a pointing device (and/or other input/output device) may be used to select one of the tree nodes displayed in window pane 1110. In such an embodiment, window pane 1120 may display a list properties for the selected tree node. In the illustrated embodiment, the listed properties are displayed as one or more key-value pairs, each key-value pair having a key to identify a property and a corresponding value to specify a current value for the identified property. For example, key column 1122 lists one or more properties and value column 1124 lists one or more corresponding values.

[00072] According to one embodiment, window pane 1120 may also provide key field 1126 and value field 1128. In such an embodiment, a new key-value pair may be added to the listed properties by inserting a key in key field 1126 and a corresponding value in value field 1128. In one embodiment, window pane 1120 may also provide add button 1140 (and/or remove button 1142) to facilitate adding (and/or removing) listed properties.

[00073] In an embodiment, a visual administrator (e.g., visual administrator 504, shown in FIG. 6) provides an interface to display and/or set an attribute of a displayed tree node (e.g., an attribute of a monitor managed bean that is part of the displayed tree node). The term “attribute” refers to a value (or characteristic) of a tree node. FIG. 12 illustrates an exemplary GUI 1200 for displaying and/or setting an attribute of a tree node, according to an embodiment of the invention.

[00074] GUI 1200 includes monitor tree pane 1210 and attribute pane 1220. Monitor tree pane 1210 may be substantially similar to window pane 1110 described above with reference to FIG. 11. In an embodiment, GUI 1200 may provide an interface to allow an end-user to select one of the tree nodes displayed in monitor tree pane 1210 (e.g., via a pointing device). In such an embodiment, attribute pane 1220 displays a list of attributes for the selected tree node. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, tree node 1212 is selected and corresponding attributes 1221-1225 are displayed in attribute pane 1220.

[00075] According to one embodiment, some or all of the listed attributes may include a corresponding attribute field (e.g., attribute field 1226). Attribute field 1226 may provide more than one function. For example, attribute field 1226 may display a

current value for a listed attribute. In addition, attribute field 1226 may allow an end-user to “overwrite” (e.g., change/set/add) a value for the listed attribute. In such an embodiment, the end-user may indicate her desire to overwrite a listed value by depressing “set attributes” button 1228.

[00076] Attribute pane 1220 may also include one or more tabs to select additional window panes. For example, the illustrated embodiment of attribute pane 1220 includes attributes tab 1230, operations tab 1232, constructors tab 1234, and/or notifications tab 1236. In one embodiment, each tab provides access to a corresponding window pane. For example, as further described below with reference to FIG. 13, operations tab 1232 may provide access to an operations pane. In an alternative embodiment of the invention, attribute pane 1220 may include more, fewer, and/or different tabs than those shown in FIG. 12.

[00077] FIG. 13 illustrates an exemplary GUI 1300 for viewing and/or invoking an operation of a tree node, according to an embodiment of the invention. The illustrated embodiment of GUI 1300 includes monitor tree pane 1310 and operation pane 1320. Monitor tree pane 1310 may be substantially similar to window pane 1110 described above with reference to FIG. 11.

[00078] In an embodiment, GUI 1300 may provide an interface to allow an end-user to select one of the tree nodes displayed in monitor tree pane 1310 (e.g., via a pointing device). In such an embodiment, operation pane 1320 displays a list of operations for the selected tree node. The term “operation” refers to a process that a tree node (e.g., a monitor managed bean of the tree node) performs. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, tree node 1312 is selected and corresponding operations 1321-

1323 are displayed in operation pane 1320. In an embodiment, an end-user may select one of operations 1321-1323 with, for example, a pointing device. In such an embodiment, the selected operation may be invoked by, for example, “invoke” button 1326.

[00079] FIG. 14 is a block diagram of computing device 1400 implemented according to an embodiment of the invention. Computing device 1400 may include: processor(s) 1410, memory 1420, one or more Input/Output interfaces 1430, network interface(s) 1440, and Java monitoring architecture (JMA) 1450. The illustrated elements may be connected together through system interconnection 1470. Processor(s) 1410 may include a microprocessor, microcontroller, field programmable gate array (FPGA), application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), central processing unit (CPU), programmable logic device (PLD), and similar devices that access instructions from system storage (e.g., memory 1420), decode them, and execute those instructions by performing arithmetic and logical operations.

[00080] JMA 1450 enables computing device 1400 to provide a visual administrator for interfacing with a network monitoring system (e.g., a Java Management extension (JMX) – based monitoring service). JMA 1450 may be executable content, control logic (e.g., ASIC, PLD, FPGA, etc.), firmware, or some combination thereof, in an embodiment of the invention. In embodiments of the invention in which JMA 1450 is executable content, it may be stored in memory 1420 and executed by processor(s) 1410.

[00081] Memory 1420 may encompass a wide variety of memory devices including read-only memory (ROM), erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM), electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), random

access memory (RAM), non-volatile random access memory (NVRAM), cache memory, flash memory, and other memory devices. Memory 1420 may also include one or more hard disks, floppy disks, ZIP disks, compact disks (e.g., CD-ROM), digital versatile/video disks (DVD), magnetic random access memory (MRAM) devices, and other system-readable media that store instructions and/or data. Memory 1420 may store program modules such as routines, programs, objects, images, data structures, program data, and other program modules that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types that facilitate system use.

[00082] One or more I/O interfaces 1430 may include a hard disk drive interface, a magnetic disk drive interface, an optical drive interface, a parallel port, serial controller or super I/O controller, serial port, universal serial bus (USB) port, a display device interface (e.g., video adapter), a network interface card (NIC), a sound card, modem, and the like. System interconnection 1470 permits communication between the various elements of computing device 1400. System interconnection 1470 may include a wide variety of signal lines including one or more of a memory bus, peripheral bus, local bus, host bus, bridge, optical, electrical, acoustical, and other propagated signal lines.

[00083] In one embodiment of the invention, the management techniques which are the focus of this application are used to manage resources within a cluster of server nodes. An exemplary application server architecture will now be described, followed by a detailed description of the management architecture and associated processes.

[00084] An application server architecture employed in one embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIG. 15. The architecture includes central services “instance” 1500 and a plurality of application server “instances” 1510, 1520. As used herein,

application server instances, 1510 and 1520, each include a group of server nodes 1514, 1516, 1518 and 1524, 1526, 1528, respectively, and a dispatcher, 1512, 1522, respectively. Central services instance 1500 includes locking service 1502 and messaging service 1504 (described below). The combination of all of the application instances 1510, 1520 and central services instance 1500 is referred to herein as a “cluster.” Although the following description will focus solely on instance 1510 for the purpose of explanation, the same principles apply to other instances such as instance 1520.

[00085] Server nodes 1514, 1516, 1518 within instance 1510 provide the business and/or presentation logic for the network applications supported by the system. Each of the server nodes 1514, 1516, 1518 within a particular instance 1510 may be configured with a redundant set of application logic and associated data. In one embodiment, dispatcher 1512 distributes service requests from clients to one or more of server nodes 1514, 1516, 1518 based on the load on each of the servers. For example, in one embodiment, a dispatcher implements a round-robin policy of distributing service requests (although various alternate load balancing techniques may be employed).

[00086] In one embodiment of the invention, server nodes 1514, 1516, 1518 are Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (“J2EE”) server nodes which support Enterprise Java Bean (“EJB”) components and EJB containers (at the business layer) and Servlets and Java Server Pages (“JSP”) (at the presentation layer). Of course, certain aspects of the invention described herein may be implemented in the context of other software platforms including, by way of example, Microsoft .NET platforms and/or the Advanced

Business Application Programming (“ABAP”) platforms developed by SAP AG, the assignee of the present application.

[00087] In one embodiment, communication and synchronization between each of instances 1510 and 1520 is enabled via central services instance 1500. As illustrated in FIG. 15, central services instance 1500 includes messaging service 1504 and locking service 1502. Message service 1504 allows each of the servers within each of the instances to communicate with one another via a message passing protocol. For example, messages from one server may be broadcast to all other servers within the cluster via messaging service 1504. In addition, messages may be addressed directly to specific servers within the cluster (e.g., rather than being broadcast to all servers).

[00088] In one embodiment, locking service 1502 disables access to (i.e., locks) certain specified portions of configuration data and/or program code stored within a central database 1530. Locking managers 1540 and 1550 employed within the server nodes lock data on behalf of various system components which need to synchronize access to specific types of data and program code (e.g., such as the configuration managers 1544 and 1554). As described in detail below, in one embodiment, locking service 1502 enables a distributed caching architecture for caching copies of server/dispatcher configuration data.

[00089] In one embodiment, messaging service 1504 and locking service 1502 are each implemented on dedicated servers. However, messaging service 1504 and the locking service 1502 may be implemented on a single server or across multiple servers while still complying with the underlying principles of the invention.

[00090] As illustrated in FIG. 15, each server node (e.g., 1518, 1528) includes a lock manager 1540, 1550 for communicating with locking service 1502; a cluster manager 1542, 1552 for communicating with messaging service 1504; and a configuration manager 1544, 1554 for communicating with central database 1530 (e.g., to store/retrieve configuration data). Although lock managers 1540 and 1550, cluster managers 1542 and 1552, and configuration managers 1544 and 1554 are illustrated with respect to particular server nodes, 1518 and 1528, in FIG. 15, each of the server nodes 1514, 1516, 1524 and 1526 and/or on the dispatchers 1512, 1522 may be equipped with equivalent lock managers, cluster managers and configuration managers.

[00091] It should be appreciated that reference throughout this specification to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the present invention. Therefore, it is emphasized and should be appreciated that two or more references to “an embodiment” or “one embodiment” or “an alternative embodiment” in various portions of this specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Furthermore, the particular features, structures or characteristics may be combined as suitable in one or more embodiments of the invention.

[00092] Similarly, it should be appreciated that in the foregoing description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, various features of the invention are sometimes grouped together in a single embodiment, figure, or description thereof for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure aiding in the understanding of one or more of the various inventive aspects. This method of disclosure, however, is not to be interpreted as

reflecting an intention that the claimed invention requires more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the following claims reflect, inventive aspects lie in less than all features of a single foregoing disclosed embodiment. Thus, the claims following the detailed description are hereby expressly incorporated into this detailed description, with each claim standing on its own as a separate embodiment of this invention.
